

Message Text

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71-62

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 IO-10 ISO-00 BIB-01 SAJ-01 SAB-01

CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05

PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 /082 W

----- 105016

R 191527Z DEC 75

FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8043

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

USMISSION GENEVA

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR,EG,UR,XF

SUBJECT: GRASPING AT OLIVE BRANCHES

GENEVA FOR MEPC DEL

1. PRAVDA (DECEMBER 19) CARRIES A TASS REVIEW OF AN AHAM
ARTICLE COMMENTING ON THE STATE OF "FRIENDLY" SOVIET-
EGYPTIAN RELATIONS. ACCORDING TO PRAVDA, AL AHAM SAID THAT
"THE FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN THE USSR AND EGYPT DOES NOT EXCLUDE
THE BEGINNINGS OF DIFFERENCES," BUT BY NO MEANS SHOULD
THESE DIFFERENCES REDUCE THE FRIENDSHIP. AL AHAM ALLEGEDLY
GOES ON TO CITE THE ASWAN DAM PROJECT, AS WELL AS THE
ECONOMIC AND MILITARY ASSISTANCE WHICH MOSCOW HAS PROVIDED
EGYPT, AS PROOF OF THE FIRM TIES WHICH EXIST BETWEEN
THE TWO COUNTRIES. DESPITE "CRISES" IN SOVIET-EGYPTIAN
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RELATIONS, THE ARTICLE CONTINUES, "THEY WILL NEVER

LEAD TO A COMPLETE BREAK", BECAUSE OF "FREEZING" OF RELATIONS CAN ONLY BE UNFAVORABLE FOR EGYPTIAN NATIONAL INTERESTS. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE TASS REVIEW ADDS, FRIENDSHIP WITH THE SOVIET UNION DOES NOT PRECLUDE EGYPTIAN FRIENDSHIP WITH OTHER COUNTRIES, "SUCH AS THE UNITED STATES." THE AL AHRAH ARTICLE REPORTEDLY CONCLUDES THAT IT IS IN THE INTERESTS OF BOTH THE USSR AND EGYPT TO COORDINATE THEIR EFFORTS TOWARD ESTABLISHING A JUST AND LASTING PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST, AS WELL AS TOWARD "PUTTING AN END TO THE UNILATERAL US STEP-BY-STEP POLICY" WHICH HAS TURNED INTO A THREAT TO ARAB UNITY.

2. COMMENT - WE ASSUME THAT THERE WAS MORE TO THE AL AHRAH ARTICLE THAN THE REMARKS CARRIED IN PRAVDA, BUT IT IS WORTH NOTING THAT MOSCOW CHOSE TO REPEAT ONLY THOSE STATEMENTS WHICH ARE CONCILIATORY IN TONE, AND WHICH COULD BE INTERPRETED AS AN EGYPTIAN OLIVE-BRANCH, HOWEVER TENTATIVE, TO THE SOVIET UNION.
STOESSEL

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS COMMENTS, FOREIGN RELATIONS, AMITY, ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE, MILITARY ASSISTANCE
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 19 DEC 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: greeneet
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975MOSCOW18211
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750442-0375
From: MOSCOW
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19751224/aaaaausp.tel
Line Count: 81
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: greeneet
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 28 MAY 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <28 MAY 2003 by MartinML>; APPROVED <27 OCT 2003 by greeneet>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: GRASPING AT OLIVE BRANCHES GENEVA FOR MEPC DEL
TAGS: PFOR, EG, UR, XF
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006